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Message Text

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43
ACTION EA-09

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---------- 013295
R 151030Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8825
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 1678

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, US, CH, TW
SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARY ON US CHINA POLICY

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1. PRESIDENT FORD'S COMMENTS ON US CHINA POLICY TO THE CHICAGO COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AS REPORTED BY THE CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY (SEE SEPTEL), REPORTS ABOUT A CUT-BACK IN US FMS CREDITS FOR THE ROC, AND REPORTED RUMORS ABOUT A PLEDGE BY THE PRESIDENT TO TENG HSIAO-PING TO REDUCE US FORCES IN TAIWAN DRASTICALLY HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF EXTENSIVE NEWS COVERAGE AND EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE LOCAL PRESS.

2. THE MARCH 13 CHUNG KUO SHIH PAO (CKSP) WAS THE ONLY LOCAL NEWSPAPER TO CARRY PORTIONS OF A MARCH 13 UPI DISPATCH FROM TAIPEI REPORTING THAT TAIPEI REACTED COOLY TO REPORTS THAT THE US WILL CONTINUE TO CUT DOWN ITS MILI-TARY STRENGTH IN TAIWAN. THE MARCH 13 CKSP ALSO COMMENTED ON A MARCH 10 AP DISPATCH ON US FMS CREDIT TO TAIWAN
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(SEE SEPTEL) AND CARRIED A UPI DISPATCH DATELINED MARCH 11,

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WASHINGTON, QUOTING THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS SAYING
THAT THE US PLANS TO CONTINUE TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF US
FORCES ON TAIWAN.

3. THE MARCH 14 CHUNG YANG JIH PAO CARRIED A REUTERS-
CHICAGO DISPATCH (SEE STATE 062050) WHICH QUOTED PRESI-
DENT FORD AS SAYING THAT THE US WILL CONTINUE TO REDUCE
ITS MILITARY STRENGTH IN TAIWAN. MARCH 14 LIEN HO PAO
AND CHUNG KUO SHIH PAO CARRIED A UPI DISPATCH DATELINED
MARCH 13, CHICAGO, WHICH REPORTEDLY QUOTED "WHITE HOUSE
SOURCES" AS SAYING PEKING HAS BEEN ASSURED BY THE PRESI-
DENT THAT THE US WILL CUT ITS MILITARY PRESENCE ON
TAIWAN BY HALF WITHIN THIS YEAR, ADDING THAT THE PRESI-
DENT OBVIOUSLY DID NOT REGARD THIS PLEDGE AS ANY NEW
AGREEMENT BUT MERELY AS A STEP IN THE COURSE OF NORMALI-
ZATION. THE DISPATCH AS CARRIED IN THESE TWO LOCAL
NEWSPAPERS ALSO QUOTED FORD AS SAYING IN RESPONSE TO A
QUESTION THAT "I BELIEVE CONTINUAL EXPANSION OF US/PRC
RELATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE
IS IN OUR INTEREST."

4. THE MARCH 14 SEMI-OFFICIAL CHUNG YANG JIH PAO AND
THE CHINA NEWS BOTH USED PRESIDENT FORD'S REPORTED REMARKS
TO THE CHICAGO COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS AS A TAKE-OFF
POINT FOR EDITORIAL COMMENT ON US CHINA POLICY. THE
CYJP EDITORIAL SAID THAT BY ANALYZING US CHINA POLICY
IN THE LIGHT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENTS, IT HAS
CONCLUDED THAT A) MAINTAINING US/ROC RELATIONS IS IN
THE INTEREST OF AND "VERY, VERY IMPORTANT" TO THE US;
B) THE US HOPES THE EXISTING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
US AND THE ROC WILL BE CONTINUALLY MAINTAINED, AND C)
THE US WILL HAVE A PROPER RELATIONSHIP WITH ROC EVEN
IF IT NORMALIZES ITS RELATIONS WITH THE PRC. THE
EDITORIAL EXPRESSED APPROVAL FOR A AND B ABOVE AND FIRM
OPPOSITION TOWARD THE US ATTEMPT TO PROMOTE NORMALIZA-
TION OF RELATONS WITH PEKING, AS EXPRESSED IN C ABOVE.
IT ALSO QUESTIONED WHETHER THE MAINTENANCE OF A PROPER
RELATIONSHIP IMPLIED CONTINUAL REINFORCEMENT OF RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE US AND ROC OR A CHANGING AND WEAKENING
OF EXISTING RELATIONS. IT CONCLUDED THAT THE TEST OF
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TIME HAS PROVEN THAT THE CONCEPT OF NORMALIZATION IS
HARMFUL TO US INTERESTS AND THOSE OF THE FREE WORLD
AND URGED PRESIDENT FORD AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO HAVE
THE COURAGE TO CORRECT THE WRONG COURSE ESTABLISHED BY
NIXON.

5. THE CHINA NEWS EDITORIAL ALSO RAISED QUESTIONS OF US
CHINA POLICY BASED ON PRESIDENT FORD'S REPORTED REMARKS, AND

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STRESSED THE CONTINUING NEED FOR THE ROC TO HAVE ACCESS TO US MILITAR
Y
SUPPLIES AND TECHNOLOGY.
FULL TEXT OF THAT EDITORIAL IS BEING SENT SEPTEL.
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5. COMMENT: THE LACK OF SPECIFIC EDITORIAL COMMENT ON
THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL STORY UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTS THE
GOVERNMENT'S RELUCTANCE TO ADDRESS THE RUMORED EROSION
OF THE MOST VISIBLE ASPECT OF THE US SECURITY COMMITMENT.
AT THE SAME TIME THE CNA STORY ON PRESIDENT FORD'S
REMARKS ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE ROC REFLECTS THE DESIRE
TO REASSURE PEOPLE OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE US AS A
COUNTER TO THE SPATE OF WITHDRAWAL REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS
SUGGESTIONG THE LIKELIHOOD OF EVENTUAL NORMALIZATION WITH THE PRC.

7. THE CHUNG YANG JIH PAO AND CHINA NEWS EDITORIALS ARE
DESIGNED TO WARN THE US OF THE "DANGERS" IN ITS CURRENT
POLICY AS PERCEIVED LOCALLY. THE SEMI-OFFICIAL DYJP
WAS UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTING THE MORE MODERATE OFFICIAL
POSITION. SIGNIFICANTLY THE LOW CIRCULATION ENGLISH
LANGUAGE CHINA NEWS ADOPTED A MORE STRIDENT TONE ABOUT
THE DANGERS OF US POLICY IN ADDRESSING ITS MAINLY FOREIGN
AND AMERICAN READERSHIP. BOTH EDITORIALS RAISE THE OBVIOUS
QUESTION AS TO WHAT THE "PROPER RELATIONSHIP" WILL BE.

8. WHILE THE NET RESULT OF THIS POTPOURRI OF NEWS REPORT-
ING AND EDITORIAL COMMENTARY WILL PROBABLY BE A
POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONDITIONING PROCESS, WE
BELIEVE THE REPORTS OF FURTHER
TROOP WITHDRAWALS AND THE OBVIOUS QUESTION OF
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WHAT THE PRESIDENT MEANT WHEN HE REFERRED TO THE "PROPER
RELATIONSHIP" WILL IN THE EYES OF SOME HERE RAISE
THE QUESTION OF THE ABILITY OF THE US TO CARRY THROUGH
THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION WITHOUT SERIOUS
DAMAGE TO THE US/TAIWAN RELATIONSHIP. WHILE
THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WAS UNDOUBTEDLY GRATIFYING IN
CERTAIN RESPECTS IT WAS NOT FULLY SATISFYING.UNGER

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